

*A Beacon Light  
on the Prairies*

*Ursuline Sisters,  
St. Angela's Convent,*



PRELATE, SASKATCHEWAN, CANADA







ST. URSULA



ST. ANGELA



# A BEACON LIGHT ON THE PRAIRIES

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# URSULINES

## of St. Angela

### FOREWORD

**I**t is said that every small prairie town seems much the same; one after the other they loom on the horizon before the traveller, each surrounded with its fields of waving wheat and each with its quota of small houses clustered about its tall grain elevators. The towns in the southwest corner of Saskatchewan are no exception — save one. Strangers approaching the village of Prelate are somewhat amazed to see situated on a hill, overlooking the village, a huge, beautiful modern structure — a sight unique on the vast rolling prairies.

“What is it?” they inquire. Is it perhaps an establishment housing some new industry? But why in a nondescript little town away from all the major centres?

When, overcome with curiosity, they inquire of the local people, they probably receive the matter-of-fact answer: O that? Why, that’s the Convent!

So simple, so natural an answer — but have they any idea just what these simple words, “the Convent” signify? Do they know the story behind this beautiful House of God, which is “home” for the URSULINES OF ST. ANGELA?

In the short history which follows we hope in simple, modest fashion to reveal to our readers some of the highlights of the origin, growth and development of our Community, here on the western prairies. May the story as it unfolds show the truth of the words of St. Angela Merici, Foundress of the Ursulines: “Be assured that this Company is the work of His Hand and that He will never abandon it as long as the world lasts. Believe this, doubt not, believe with unwavering faith that it will be so.”



# Saint Angela and

LIFE OF ST. ANGELA

AND ORIGIN OF THE URSULINE ORDER 1535



**A**ngela Merici was born on March 21st, 1474, at Desenzano, a small town in Lombardy. Her parents belonged to the middle class and were respected by all who knew them. The family consisted of several boys and girls. It was a simple, happy home, for all were united by the bonds of piety and of deep affection. Their life was calm and uneventful; and peace of heart was the reward of their prayer and labour.

Brought up in the heart of the country, Angela spoke the simple language of her people; she could not even write. From an early age she had consecrated her heart to Christ as her spouse. Her ardour for self-sacrifice knew no bounds. Fearing that her beautiful hair might be a cause of temptation, she bathed it in a mixture of soot and water and ruined its beauty. She grew pale from her vigils and fasts. In that world of the pagan Renaissance, Angela's young heart was fixed on Christ. She longed for "a desert: where she could pray, suffer, and die in peace." God heard her prayer and broke one by one the links which bound her affections to earth.

At fifteen, Angela was left an orphan. Her maternal uncle, Biancosi, a good Catholic and wealthy man, brought Angela and her sister, (now the sole survivors of the family) to his home at Salo. Shortly after, Angela's sister died. Under these repeated trials, the young girl bowed her head in deep resignation. She returned to Desenzano on her uncle's death. Alone in the fields one day, absorbed in prayer, she saw a dazzling light which broke forth from dark clouds. There appeared a mysterious ladder reaching from heaven to earth, on which countless virgins, two and two, ascended and descended. Clad in bright robes and bearing glorious crowns, they sang melodious hymns. Angela fell into an ecstasy, and could neither speak nor move. One of the virgins came forward: "Angela," she said, "know that God has



# the Ursulines

shown you this vision to signify that before you die, you are to found, in Brescia, a company of virgins like these."

The Divine Will and her own special vocation were thus clearly indicated. Assured by her confessor that all came from God, she gathered around her a number of young girls and trained them to the apostolate of instruction. Little children were then assembled and taught Christian Doctrine.

Attracted by Franciscan poverty and austerity, Angela joined the Franciscan Tertiaries. She gladly renounced all temporal possessions; she slept on a mat, with a stone for a pillow. Her dress was of coarse material; she wore a rough hairshirt. Her food consisted of fruit and wild herbs. On all Fridays throughout the year, and three days a week in Lent, she ate absolutely nothing. But, as a Franciscan Tertiary, she enjoyed the privilege, (rare in those days), of daily Communion, and this Heavenly Bread became the support of her body as of her soul.

The French invasion of Lombardy closed the gates of Brescia against Angela for some years. Finally, in 1515, she was able to go there. Her gracious tact and sympathy, her enlightened prudence and her sanctity had won many friends for Angela in all ranks. She was welcomed to the home of the noble Patingola. After some months, she accepted the invitation of the family of Antonio Romano, a wealthy merchant and a true servant of God. Impelled by devotion, Angela made three pilgrimages: the first, to Mantua, to pray at the tomb of the Venerable Mother Hosanna, a saintly Dominican nun who had recently died; the second, to the Holy Land; the third, to Rome.

On her dangerous voyage to the Holy Land, Angela was suddenly struck blind, without any apparent cause, near Crete. However, she bravely continued her journey, and offered herself to God as a victim of expiation. She said, "If I cannot see the Holy Place, God, at least, will not refuse me tears to weep over my own sins and those of the the world." On the return journey, God miraculously restored her sight on the island of Crete.

In Brescia, Francis Sforza, the exiled Duke of Milan, begged of Angela to be his spiritual guide and intercessor with God in his crushing afflictions. She became his counsellor and his reverend friend.

At this time God showered marvellous gifts on Angela. Her infused knowledge of Latin helped her to penetrate the hidden meaning of Holy Scripture. She soared aloft on the wings of mystic contemplation. Through her discernment of spirits and her prophetic light, she exercised a great influence over clergy and princes alike.

In 1530, Angela was ready for her great mission. On the advice of her confessor, Father Seraphim of Bologna, she selected twelve girls, and instructed them daily in her little room near St. Afra's Church in Brescia. This little room is now a place of pilgrimage; the benches used by her first companions can still be seen. A pious widow, Elizabeth Prato, placed an oratory at Angela's disposal. Here she continued her instructions for two years. One night, when she was alone in prayer, Our Divine Lord appeared and spoke severely to her, "Where is your faith? I have shown you clearly My Will, and yet the order of virgins which is to contribute to My Glory and to aid My Church, torn by heresy, and dishonored by relaxation, does not yet exist. Your zeal cools, as I add repeated proofs of My love. You speak but empty words, for they are belied by your endless delays. I begin to doubt your fidelity."

With bitter tears Angela replied, "O Lord! forget my past negligence. I deserve fully your reproaches, which have penetrated to the depths of my soul. I will repair for my delay by my prompt obedience. This very day will I begin the work, to prove to You, O my Lord, my sorrow, my zeal, and my absolute submission to Your Holy Will."

The plan of her institute was immediately drawn up, and her companions unanimously promised to observe the Rule. Angela was strongly encouraged in her undertaking by a vision of the Virgin Martyr, St. Ursula, who gave her a standard, as Angela was to be the commander of the new army of virgins and the leader in their warfare against the enemies of Christ. Angela chose St. Ursula as the Special Patroness of her Company, and called it the Company of St. Ursula. For herself she reserved the labours of Foundress. St. Ursula was the recognized patroness of youth and learning; she was especially the patroness of the famous mediaeval universities of Paris and Coimbra.

November 25th, 1535, feast of St. Catherine, Virgin and Martyr, was the day chosen for the official foundation of the Company. This consisted of Angela, her first twelve companions, and fifteen other virgins. All heard Mass, received Holy Communion, and each made a simple vow of chastity. Then all began the apostolate in their own homes; they instructed young girls and children in Christian Doctrine, they visited hospitals, prisons, and the poor. Soon in each district of Brescia there was a directress to organize the work. As the Sisters were scattered, each in her own home, there could be no community life; but periodical meetings and daily religious exercises in common, prepared the way for regular observance.



There were already seventy-two members a month after the foundation. After much prayer, Angela dictated the Constitutions to her secretary, Gabriel Cozzano; these received episcopal approbation on August 8, 1536. Angela then summoned her first Chapter, at which she was unanimously chosen as first Superior. She renewed her zeal and self-sacrifice in the interests of her children. But feeling her end draw near, she compiled her "Counsels" and made her "Will." On January 27, 1540, at 9:30, she sweetly slept in the Lord.

Angela left behind her company of one hundred and fifty Ursulines, the mustard seed which was to multiply in the world and survive through the centuries. "Hold for certain, my dear Mothers and Sisters, that our Company is the work of God. His Hand drew it from nothing; His Hand will sustain it; He will never abandon it, even to the end of the world. He had established it, who can destroy it? Believe these words, I know what I am saying. Blessed are they who will walk on this way." (St. Angela).

In 1544, four years after her death, Paul III approved the Company of St. Ursula which today numbers 34,000 members.

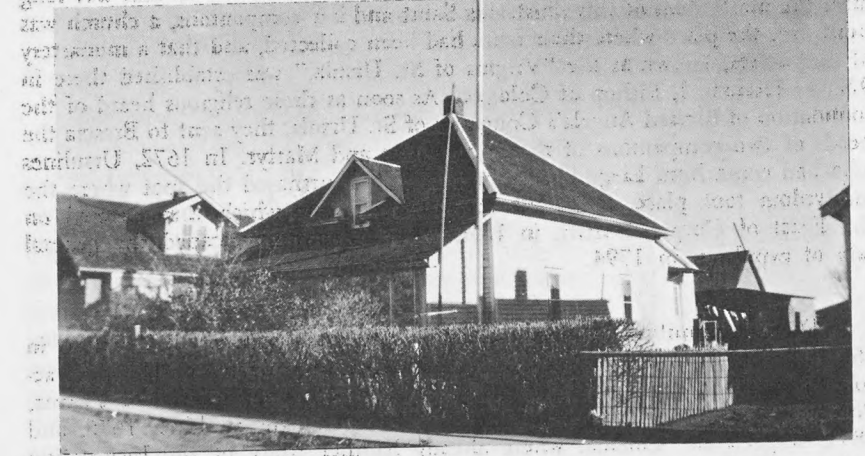
The Ursuline Order took its rise in Italy, but its perfect development is to be found in France. One of the seven large monasteries to be established in France was that of Bordeaux. In 1614, Monsignor Strecheus, the auxiliary Bishop of Liege, seeing so many young girls deprived of instruction, founded a community to which he soon afterwards gave the Rule and Constitutions of the Ursulines of Bordeaux. Its numbers grew rapidly; from it proceeded the convent of Cologne. The very name stirs emotion in the heart of a daughter of St. Ursula, for there she and her numerous band of faithful followers died that their faith and virtue might live. Early mediaeval records tell us that not long after the martyrdom of this illustrious Saint and her companions, a church was built over the place where their relics had been collected, and that a monastery of canonesses, known as the "Virgins of St. Ursula," was established there in 922, by Herman I, Bishop of Cologne. As soon as these religious heard of the foundation of Blessed Angela's Company of St. Ursula, they sent to Brescia the heads of two companions of the holy Virgin and Martyr. In 1672, Ursulines who had come from Liege to Cologne in 1639, purchased the spot where the martyrdom took place, and built there a Monastery which they entered on the Feast of Corpus Christi, in 1676. This Monastery escaped the general fate of expulsion in 1794.

The community of Cologne aided in the establishment of Dorsten, in 1669, the only convent in Westphalia spared by royal decree of 1817, on account of its usefulness in the education of youth. The communities of Vienna, Pressburg, and Hascluenne also proceeded from Cologne in 1660, 1676, and 1854, respectively. Canada, where already Mother Mary of the Incarnation had gone from Tours to Quebec, was next to receive the Ursulines from Cologne who established a community at Prelate, Saskatchewan, in 1919.



Convent 1919

The building is a fine example of the work of the architect, who has designed it in a style which is both modern and traditional. It is a fine example of the work of the architect, who has designed it in a style which is both modern and traditional. It is a fine example of the work of the architect, who has designed it in a style which is both modern and traditional.



first Residence 1919

# *The Spark*

## ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF PRELATE COMMUNITY 1919

**C**louds of war were ominously gathering over Europe. Would the expulsion of Religious from Germany be repeated as during the time of the Kulturkampf? Religious Orders anxiously asked themselves this question and sought means and ways of meeting the catastrophe — should it come. America offered a vast field for apostolic labours, and maybe — a haven in troubled times.

Three communities of Ursulines, namely: Cologne, Haseleunne, and Schweidnitz, undertook the joint venture of crossing the ocean to Canada in the autumn of 1912. Winnipeg was their destination where they took charge of the parochial school in the Parish of St. Joseph.

The storm in Europe did break, in the late summer of 1914, as World War No. 1. All overseas communication ceased. No more letters, no more parcels came to cheer the homesick, anxious hearts and minds. The members on this side of the ocean must act to provide that hoped for haven, if needed, for their Community, which was now wholly caught in the whirlpool of a dreadful war.

Eventually, at the close of the war, the Ursuline Sisters left Winnipeg and guided by God's never failing Providence established three separate communities in Saskatchewan — one at Bruno, one at Vibank and one at Prelate.

This short history brings you the story of the Prelate foundation. In April 1919, the newly appointed parish priest of this small village, Reverend Father J. Riedinger, O.M.I., arrived, bringing with him several Ursuline Sisters. While the Sisters took up residence temporarily in a private home, plans were made for the erection of a Convent. Meanwhile, the Sisters began classes for the Catholic children of the village in the town hall. By the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 1919, the construction of the Convent had been completed as far as funds would allow. On this memorable day the new Convent — consisting of the basement and one storey with a temporary

flat roof — was blessed, and the Community of three Sisters took up their abode: St. Angela's Convent.

Mother Luitgard, formerly of Schweidnitz, governed as Mother Prefect of the infant community for five years. Then in 1924 the Prelate community was officially recognized as a foundation of Cologne, and Mother Clementia was appointed Superior. She continued to govern the Community until 1942. During this time of pioneering, Mother displayed a spirit of undaunted fortitude and endurance. The spiritual and academic training of the Sisters, the finances of the Community, the care of boarders, the opening of the first branch houses — all these she undertook with joy and confidence. The Community, was blessed by a steady increase of vocations. The Sisters devoted themselves with heart and soul to the task of the education of youth, conducting classes both in the Convent and in the village school.

Through the generosity, devotion and self-sacrifice of these pioneer members a tiny spark had been enkindled on the prairies — a spark which was to grow steadily and become a BEACON LIGHT casting its beams afar.

As early as 1925 the Community began to expand with the opening of its first branch house, St. Joseph's Convent, in Tramping Lake, Saskatchewan, another small prairie village. Here too, there were many hardships to be endured, but the seed then planted bears abundant fruit in a flourishing community today.

1927 saw the opening of a second mission at Quinton, Sask., under the patronage of St. Ursula. It was here that the Sisters had to undergo the severe trial of wearing a modified garb for a number of years due to governmental pressures which forbade the religious garb or any religious emblem in the public school. The sacrifice willingly made, has born abundant fruit as evidenced in the thriving community at Quinton today.

In the winter of 1928 calamity struck the community at Prelate in the form of a fire. Since the source of the fire itself could not be immediately determined, much damage was done by the great volume of water poured into the building. The kindness and generosity of the local people during this time of trial will always be gratefully remembered. The task of restoration and repair undertaken by the Sisters called for much effort and sacrifice, and willing hands were practically worn to the bone with the scraping, scrubbing and scouring required. After the clean-up campaign, construction was renewed and the top two storeys of the Convent completed.

August 15, 1928, marked a great event in the history of the young Institute. Six Sisters pronounced their Temporary Vows. And so the tiny flame





continued to grow — God's guiding Hand at all times sheltering it through days of calm and joy as well as in days of trial.

Many were the school applications made at this time, requesting the Sisters to come and teach in various parishes throughout the province. Since numbers were small and the Sisters were young and inexperienced as yet, it seemed better to carry on the Apostolate in the area immediately surrounding Prelate. Hence, the Sisters accepted the task of teaching in several small one-room rural schools in the vicinity. During the week these Sisters made their homes in the respective teacherages nearby the schoolhouse, and each week-end they returned to St. Angela's to become spiritually and corporally refreshed.

About this time the people of Prelate and district requested the Sisters to aid them temporarily in the establishment of a hospital in the village. Though the work of the Ursulines is that of education, the Sisters consented to staff the hospital until such time as it could be placed in other hands. After several years of devoted service they withdrew to attend to the ever-increasing demands of their apostolate of teaching. The people of Prelate were able by this time to provide the necessary personnel for the administration and maintenance of their hospital and it became known as the Prelate Union Hospital. It has adequately served the district maintaining a high standard of efficiency and service.

The angel of death visited the community at Prelate for the first time in the spring of 1929. Sister Margaret, an Irish-American widow and experienced teacher, who had entered the community in 1921, was laid to rest. Her genuine piety, child-like simplicity and unselfish dedication to duty had made her greatly loved by all who knew her. The first gleaming white cross was raised in the graveyard on the hillside. Today these crosses number twelve — silent, peaceful reminders of the reward following a life of devoted service to the Spouse and King of Hearts.

## TRYING DECADE 1929 - 1939

**N**ow followed a very trying period in the life of the young Community. A decade of severe drought struck the Saskatchewan prairies. Along with all the other inhabitants of this stricken area — the "Dust Bowl" as it was commonly called, the Sisters carried on. Though clouds of dust towered skyward and darkened the sun, though food was scarce, though salaries were meagre or not forthcoming, nothing could daunt the missionary spirit which inspired the Community and sustained its members. In union with their Divine Master they gladly suffered the trial of poverty and want. The darkest dust cloud, they knew, had a silver lining. During these trying years great sorrow was felt by all at the death of three devoted members of the community: Sister Elfrieda — 1934; Sister Aloysia — 1938 and Sister Cordula — 1940. May they rest in peace.



The year 1942 was one of transition for the community, for it was in that year that the tremendous responsibility of the government of the Community passed to one of the first candidates admitted to the institute. Many were the anxieties and manifold cares laid on the shoulders of the newly appointed Superior, Mother Bernarda. Her high sense of duty, spirit of sacrifice and lively faith buoyed her up as she bravely shouldered her daily cross — and St. Angela's at Prelate continued to sail on . . .

## ERA OF EXPANSION

**A**fter emerging from the decade of poverty and trial, the community could look forward to brighter days ahead. Year after year had seen new aspirants dedicating their lives to the love and service of God. The Community having grown greatly in number, an era of expansion was about to begin. The tiny spark that had been kindled was now a BEACON LIGHT whose rays were capable of reaching to many points throughout the province. Thus, small communities were established and the apostolate of Education carried far and wide. The Sisters took charge of the schools in each of these small missions and soon the Ursulines were known as efficient educators in the province. Membership in each of the Communities was necessarily small, and strong bonds of affection and loyalty with the Motherhouse were maintained. Each summer, after spending the first two weeks of July in various parishes doing Catechetical Work, the Sisters eagerly returned to Prelate to be renewed in heart and mind and spirit. Within a period of twenty years, sixteen branch houses were established:

Denzil .....	St. Clement's Convent .....	1937
Revenue .....	St. Gerard's Convent .....	1938
Liebethal .....	St. Anthony's Convent .....	1943
Fox Valley .....	Perpetual Help Convent .....	1943
Barthel .....	St. Anne's Convent .....	1943
Goodsoil .....	Holy Angels Convent .....	1943
St. Walburg .....	Lady of the Snows Convent .....	1944
Richmound .....	Holy Family Convent .....	1946
Primate .....	Child Jesus Convent .....	1948
Cosine .....	Lady of Fatima Convent .....	1949
Viscount .....	St. Augustine's Convent .....	1950
Saskatoon .....	Christ the King Convent .....	1953
Shaunavon .....	Sacred Heart Convent .....	1953
Provost, Alta. ....	Immaculate Heart Convent .....	1958
Yorkton .....	Stella Maris Convent .....	1959
Swift Current .....	House of Providence Convent .....	1961

And so the sphere of influence was ever widening and the apostolate of the Christian education of youth being carried ever farther afield.

# THE SPARK BECOMES A BEACON LIGHT

## MATERIAL PROGRESS

**I**t was in 1943 that Reverend Mother Antoinette was appointed Superior of the expanding community. For many years now she has devoted herself whole-heartedly to the welfare of the Institute. Under her careful guidance the finances of the Community have become stabilized, a large, modern Convent consisting of two wings — housing a beautiful chapel, classrooms, auditorium and living quarters — has been erected, a playdium offering a wide range of opportunities for physical activities has been built, a lovely shrine of Our Lady graces the Convent grounds, and in several of our missions suitable convent homes with modern facilities have been erected, and in others necessary renovations have been made.

## SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

The accomplishments in the realm of the spiritual, have kept pace with those of the material. The training school, such an integral part of every religious Order has received much care and attention. The Postulate and Novitiate have been stabilized and the three year Juniorate has been brought into existence. Hence, the young Sisters receive five and one half years of special training before pronouncing their Perpetual Vows and engaging in the active apostolate. Another major task undertaken was the revision and authorization of the Constitutions which were officially approved by the Most Reverend Archbishop and Bishops of the Ecclesiastical Province of Regina on the Feast of the Most Holy Rosary, October 7, 1954. The Generalate set up by these Constitutions began to function immediately, and the transition came about quite normally. The Directory which had also just been compiled contained supplementary explanations to the Holy Rule and is a very helpful guide. The first General Chapter of the Community was held on April 8 and 9, 1961 and Reverend Mother Antoinette was elected as Superior General. Now followed a period of modern adaptation of religious communities to the wishes of the Holy See. The Community became engaged in making various changes such as the modification of the garb, the transfer from Latin to the use of English in the community prayers and the Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Special summer Courses were given by competent lecturers on topics of current interest such as the Kerygmatic approach in Catechetics, and a Sociology course giving a deeper insight into the social doctrines of the Church. In order to secure uniformity in classroom management, a School Guide was compiled.

Those Sisters not engaged in teaching have been privileged also to receive summer Courses in such areas as cooking, sewing, interior decorating and first

aid. These Sisters have with loving devotion, cared for the physical wants of the Sisters, and by their prayers and devoted lives have been the mainstay of those engaged in the active apostolate.

## EDUCATIONAL GROWTH

Ursuline teachers cherish especially the traditions of their Order and strive to adhere at all times to the Ursuline Method of Education. The Sisters are kept well abreast of the times and are conversant with modern developments in the educational field. They are adequately certificated and specialize in various academic branches of study. Presently, a tremendous effort is being made to have the Sisters further their studies at the University level and to obtain their degrees in education.

The Ursuline field of labour embraces persons of all ages.

1. Pre-Schoolers — Help to Catholic Mothers
2. Kindergarten
3. Primary Grades (Including grades 1, 2, 3)
4. Intermediate Grades (Including grades 4, 5, 6)
5. Junior High (Including approximately grades 7, 8, 9)
6. High School (Including approximately grades 10, 11, 12)
7. Academy High School (Grades 11 - 12)
8. Adult Education (Training for Home-making)
9. Religious Training School (Training of new members)
10. Catechetical Classes (Summer School Classes, etc.)
11. Fine Arts:

Household Science	Commercial
Music	Playwriting
Art	Storywriting
Needlecraft	Drama
Leatherwork	Oratory — Poetry
12. Our Press
  - A. Crusader Shield
  - B. Our Family — contribution for Children's Page
  - C. Annual Supplement to School Guide.

The prairie Beacon Light houses also an Academy, where some fifty young girls pursue their High School studies each year. Under the guidance of a devoted Staff they follow the regular academic Course of Studies prescribed by the Department of Education. Besides this they are given careful guidance in character training, religion and social graces. Most important of all they are trained according to Ursuline tradition to take their place in society as ideal Catholic mothers

In the field of adult education, the Ursulines of St. Angela try to minister to the moral and spiritual needs of their contemporaries. Much can be, and is being accomplished by counselling and advising lay teachers who work side by side with them in the classrooms. Instructing converts, advising perturbed and often heart-broken parents, taking an active part in Home and School Associations — all these are ways in which the Sisters reach a helping hand out into the world of adults.

Education for "home" and "family living" is the main aim of the Home Economics branch in the educational field at our Saskatoon centre, Glengarda. Here, classes are offered in various phases of household management for junior and senior high school girls as well as for women from the city.

The School of Music established at the Academy in Prelate is unique in this area of the prairies, and is far-famed for its accomplishments in the theoretical, vocal and instrumental lines. In many of our branch houses, too, there are classes of music students. The Sisters follow chiefly the Courses prescribed by the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto from which several of them hold a degree in Music.

To every Ursuline, the teaching of Religion is not only a duty, but a privilege as well. In all our classrooms scattered throughout Saskatchewan and Alberta, the Sisters impart daily Religious instructions to their charges. Several excellent courses in Catechetics have been given at the Motherhouse during summer vacations and the Sisters have found these most helpful. Perhaps the most outstanding work of the Ursulines of Prelate in the field of catechetical instructions is witnessed each summer in the first two weeks of July, as the Sisters disperse in two's and three's to about thirty different parishes to instruct First Communicants and older children in the truths of their faith. In all, more than 1,000 children are under our care during these two weeks each year. Hopefully the Ursuline sows the seed, waters it with her prayers, and looks to God to give the increase in due time.

Still another concern of the Ursulines as educators is the printed word. By making contributions to local magazines, the Sisters put their talents of art, story writing, poetry making and letter writing, to good use. The *Cruader Shield*, an annual publication from the Academy serves to keep contact with alumni, provides a souvenir of the school year and puts the hidden talents of the student body to good use. Each year, too, the School Committee publishes a bulletin to supplement the Ursuline School Guide, keeping the Sisters abreast of modern trends and serving to maintain a sense of uniformity within the teaching body.

Ursuline educators also strive to be mindful of the needs of the world at large. Therefore they educate their pupils to extend their charity to the Poor by donations to mission areas at home and abroad. The Community contributes annually to a special Seminarian Fund and at intervals throughout the year sends donations of clothing, printed materials and religious articles to several needy areas in Labrador, Africa and South America.

Most dear to the heart of every Ursuline is this Apostolate of Education for which our Holy Foundress established the Ursuline Order, and which reaches out to over 3,000 children here on the western prairie. In all their work of education, Ursulines are conscious that they must rely: FIRST — on God; and only SECONDLY on pedagogical methods. This was St. Angela's way of action. They are aware too, that their field of labour is not self-chosen, but has been enjoined upon them by Holy Mother Church in the words: The special end of the Congregation is the salvation of souls through the education of youth, especially of young girls.

# TRIBUTES

## TRIBUTES TO OUR BISHOPS, CHAPLAINS AND PASTORS

**F**rom the earliest days of the Community's existence God has provided chosen shepherds in the persons of the hierarchy and clergy who have cared for its spiritual welfare.

From 1919 until 1930 while the Prelate area was under the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese of Regina, Most Reverend O. E. Mathieu, D.D., Most Reverend J. C. McGuigan, D.D., and Most Reverend P. J. Monahan, D.D. were three chosen shepherds who carefully guided the new community.

Since the establishment of the Gravelbourg Diocese in 1930 the Community has been zealously cared for by five different bishops. The first, Most Reverend J. M. Rodrigue Villeneuve, O.M.I., D.D., who later became Cardinal of the Church, cared for the Community in its first struggle for existence. He was succeeded by Most Reverend Arthur Melanson D.D., who in spite of failing health, spent himself untiringly to promote the spiritual welfare of his flock. During the drought years of the thirties, Most Reverend Joseph Guy, O.M.I., D.D., provided zealously for both the spiritual and temporal needs of his charges. Most Reverend Joseph Lemieux, O.P., D.D., guided the community safely through a serious financial crisis and proved to be a most kind and encouraging advisor in difficult days.

At present, Most Reverend Aime Decosse, D.D. is guiding and shepherding the community with fatherly zeal and concern.

The zealous Oblate Fathers, Missionaries of Mary Immaculate, who have acted as spiritual guides of the Community from its earliest days also deserve grateful tribute in this short history. Their kindly solicitude and faithful service even beyond the call of duty, have been deeply appreciated. Reverend Father Joseph Reidinger on receiving his obedience to Prelate in 1919 offered the Ursulines the welcome to this field of labour in the West. Others who have filled this post for varying lengths of time are: Reverend Fathers P.

Bielcr, H. Loran, A. Forner, J. Schneider, J. Warnke, E. Nelz, F. Otterbach. In 1948, the guidance of the community passed to Reverend Father Francis Hermann who gave his devoted service throughout the time of reconstruction. He was replaced in 1963 by Reverend Father J. Kuffner who in turn was succeeded by our present chaplain, Reverend Father Bernard Lewans, who is ably and conscientiously filling this post.

Besides celebrating daily Mass and administering the Sacraments, other services rendered by these devoted Chaplains have included: weekly conferences to the community, daily religious instruction in Christian Doctrine, Apologetics and Theology for the Training School, bi-weekly conferences and annual retreats for the Boarding School, as well as several excellent Courses given during summer vacations. Through careful guidance, wise and prudent counsel, much has been done for the spiritual advancement of the Community. The Community remembers prayerfully our devoted Chaplains, the zealous shepherds of souls.

Throughout the mission field too, the Sisters have received constant assistance and encouragement from the Reverend Pastors with whom they have had the good fortune to work as co-laborers in the Vineyard of Our Lord. It is consoling and inspiring to come into contact with the tremendous missionary zeal emanating from a quiet, obscure priestly heart. In many cases great obstacles have had to be overcome in order to obtain and keep the Sisters in their parishes to carry on the work of education. Tribute is due to all these good Fathers who have been such a constant source of help and edification.

## TRIBUTE TO DECEASED MEMBERS

**A**s the rays from the Beacon Light reached ever farther and farther afield, new members swelled the ranks of active workers, but death also claimed its toll. Seven more members were, at intervals, called home to their eternal nuptials: Sister Teresa in 1949, Sister Anselma - 1951, Sister Pascal - 1954, Sister Agatha - 1956, Sister Marcella - 1959, Sister Martha - 1960.

The most recent one to bid farewell to the Community has been its foundress, Mother Clementia. There had been no indication of the immediate approach of death which came to Mother suddenly on the evening of July 5, 1961. The tiny flame which she had set alight some forty years earlier burns brightly now as a Beacon Light, and from this prairie Convent on the hill she was laid to rest in the cemetery nearby, with eleven members who had gone before. The faith and courage with which Mother faced the pioneer days will be prayerfully remembered by the Community.

Trustfully we pray that as these souls are again united in Heaven, they will ever aid us, together with the Patrons of our Order and those of our mission Houses.



## A PLEA TO OUR HEAVENLY PATRONS

As the Heavenly Court renders homage to Thee,  
O most Holy and Blessed Trinity,  
We, Ursulines, likewise to Thee honor pay  
By dedicating here in a special way  
Each of our Houses, eighteen in all,  
To powerful intercessors upon whom we call  
To bring Your blessings, Your provident care —  
To help us one day in their bliss to share.

God bless our Mission fields!

Three of our Houses proudly bear  
Our Lord's own Name and beg His care.  
We humbly pray that CHRIST OUR KING  
Will reign o'er hearts and graces bring;  
That more and more in His SACRED HEART  
We may take refuge and daily depart  
Strengthened, renewed. Our charges we guide  
To learn of the CHILD JESUS and stay at His side.

Little King, bless our Missions!

And thou, dear Mother, Our Heavenly Queen,  
To five of our missions you have been  
A STELLA MARIS, a guiding star,  
When tossed on life's sea we wander far.  
May we always find shelter in your IMMACULATE HEART,  
As PERPETUAL HELP you e'er do your part.  
Our LADY OF FATIMA, we tell thee our woes,  
Shield us from harm, Our LADY OF SNOWS.

Mary, protect our Missions!



In striving for virtue to our Patrons we turn:  
From ST. GERARD may each of us learn  
Obedience prompt; and may ST. ANTHONY  
Help us to find — true simplicity.  
ST. ANNE we implore thee, give us a share  
In your humility and confidence rare.  
ST. CLEMENT dear patron lend us your aid  
That a foundation for virtue may be firmly laid.

Blessed Patrons, guard our Missions!

To you ST. JOSEPH we have always come  
When building or financing had to be done.  
Graciously you have helped us in every need,  
Gave us much more than for what we did plead.  
Our spiritual edifice help us also raise,  
For on this one we work till the end of our days.  
Then "Guardian of Virgins" hear our prayer —  
At the hour of death, please be waiting there.

St. Joseph, defend our Missions!

To mold Catholic Homes is our God-given mission —  
So — quite in keeping with Ursuline tradition  
HOLY FAMILY CONVENT — one House had to be  
To honour, deservingly, these "blessed three"  
And there remain our guardians true —  
Ye HOLY ANGELS, pray for us, too.  
And on DIVINE PROVIDENCE may we rely  
To keep us from harm as the years go by.

Divine Providence, watch over our missions!

ST. ANGELA, our mother and foundress lov'd,  
Watch over your daughters from heaven above;  
That as teachers of youth we may always fulfill  
Our Heavenly Father's most gracious Will.  
ST. URSULA, virgin and martyr renowned,  
Assist us to fight that we, too, may be crowned!  
ST. AUGUSTINE, oh help us our Holy Rule to keep,  
For then a rich harvest of souls we shall reap.

Patrons of Our Order, intercede for us all!

## SUMMARY

**T**his in brief is the story behind that "Convent on the Hill" located in the tiny prairie town of Prelate, Saskatchewan. Today its members number 160. Dotting the province to the north, south, east and west, its eighteen branch Houses bear the torch of the Christian education of youth to some 3,000 students in its schools. Its educational endeavors embrace all possible phases from Kindergarten and primary grades, on through the elementary and high school sections to adult education in the form of homemaking classes and instruction of converts. Activities in the field of Catechetics are many and varied; the finer arts are promoted with zeal and earnestness. Thus, the Ursulines devote themselves to the service of God as:

Teachers

Musicians

Artists

Homemakers

Secretaries

Catechists

Seamstresses

Nurses' Aides

There has been a missionary spirit in the Ursuline Order from the earliest times and this small foundation on the Canadian prairies is no exception. Furthermore, should Holy Mother Church call for the services of Ursuline Religious in other mission fields, there will always be a ready response. The primary ideal of the Order is, of course, the personal sanctification of its members by combining a life of prayer with a life of action modelled on Christ's own life. They strive ever to walk in the "Presence of God — by loving obedience — at the present moment" — in union with the Eucharistic Saviour. The secondary object is to devote themselves to the Christian education of youth — by teaching. St. Angela used to say that the disorders of society are the result of disorder in the family and that there are too few Christian mothers. Although born nearly 500 years ago, St. Angela challenges

modern girls — and sets the pace by her high ideals, spirit of prayer and courageous example, to consecrate their lives to Christ and the Church by seeking God's glory alone, personal holiness and a harvest of souls.

"So let your light shine before men," said Christ. So may the light from this Beacon on the Prairies, which has been carefully kept aflame by God's unfailing Providence for almost fifty years, — so may this light continue to shine giving glory to God, and inspiration to the Ursuline Sisters of Prelate as they labour zealously among the souls in their charge on the vast prairie in the West.

ALL FOR THY GLORY, O GOD!





## REIGN, CHRIST OUR KING

Lord Jesus, our Eucharistic King  
 With Thy infinite might and power  
 Keep aglow this great Beacon Light  
 To radiate Thy reign in homes the world o'er  
 Through Your devoted Daughters of St. Angela  
 Champions of Your compassionate Heart Divine  
 While holding aloft Thy noble banner  
 Their challenge they will find  
 In reaping a great harvest of souls  
 In every land and clime.

All youth and young maidens fair,  
 These they must lead  
 Triumphant to Thee, and for them dare  
 All foolish pride, all peril, and all need.  
 "Go teach all nations" — still they hear the word  
 That fired the chosen Twelve in Galilee  
 The Pentecostal flame in them is stirred —  
 "No longer I," they cry, "but Christ in me."  
 And forth they go upon paths Christ trod,  
 Even to death, to win the world for God!

For further information write to:

Very Reverend Mother General  
 St. Angela's Convent,  
 Prelate, Saskatchewan



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